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# **The Divine Comedy of Dante**

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## LA VITA NUOVA

La Vita Nuova twice was Dante's part—

Once when the wonder filled his youthful eyes  
Of that fair smile which woke for aye his heart,  
And after guided him through Paradise.

Again a new life was his heritage

When Béatrice passed beyond his sight  
And fickle Florence, in her sudden rage,  
Made him an exile in the homeless night.

A bitter new life was his gloomy fate

Who, heavy-hearted, toiled up alien stairs,  
Hungering with a soul insatiate,  
Lonely, and crying "Peace!" in fruitless prayers.

The later new life found a vaster form

Than this sweet love-song of his dreaming youth;  
He faced the pain of death, the changeless storm  
That reaps the fruit of sin in spite of ruth.

He climbed with aching feet the mount where guile

Dissolves in fire that burns the dross away,  
He journeyed on to meet again the smile  
That gave to Paradise a brighter day.

And on from flight to flight, and star to star

He heard the mighty music of the blest,  
And found light deepen light, till from afar,  
God lifted him to action that is rest.

And in that beatific sight he found

The peace that in the world he sought in vain—  
Peace from beholding as a perfect round  
The warring elements of joy and pain.

And so within his heart and mind arose

The new life conquering the storms of Time,  
And Dante built a world out of his woes,  
With art unequalled singing the sublime.

—From "*A Book of Meditations*" by EDWARD HOWARD GRIGGS.

## NOTE

WE think of Dante as the poet of moral failure, facing unflinchingly the working out of misdeeds into various forms of spiritual death. Dante is this, but even more is he the poet of the morally sublime, rising higher than any other in representing the answer to the human soul in the light, love and music that culminate in the vision of God. And between the two worlds, the one of moral failure, the other of the morally sublime, is the third, the world of human struggle, away from evil toward God; and this, too, Dante has studied in the *Purgatorio*.

To be lifted out of our own age on to the peak of vision of some past and different epoch in its supreme aspiration, is to gain a perspective in reference to the changing and submerging stream of present life that helps us to sift the unessential from the eternal and center our lives in the supreme realities. Dante helps us so in fullest measure since his own aim is to study the final effect of each deed of sin or virtue upon the human soul.

Moreover, the world Dante voices has a strength that is complementary to modern life. It did not possess the measure of political and industrial freedom we enjoy to-day, nor the wealth of discoveries and inventions in science; (but it was brooded over by the sense of eternity.) It was conscious of the infinite meaning of human action. It had the vast moral aspiration, the study of the things of time in the light of eternity, so necessary to round out the world-view born of our over-hasty, restlessly moving modern life.

And the poetry of Dante: imaginative vision that realizes all to the inner eye of the artist and the reader alike; vast reaches of gloom in the *Inferno*, set off by glimpses of the beauty of the 'sweet world'; Nature used in all her marvelous still charm in the climbing of the mountain and the peace of the earthly paradise; light multiplied into light, music deepening to ever vaster harmony, circular motion that expresses the active union of the soul with God, increasing in the *Paradiso* to the wonder of the Beatific Vision—all these elements are in the beauty of Dante's poetry.

To this wealth of imagination is married Dante's own music, sobbing in the moan of Francesca da Rimini, harshened into the discords of hell, 'smiled out' in the words that come from Beatrice's lips, deepening and broadening into the sublime song of paradise—Dante's appeal to the heart through the harmony of music is almost as great as his intense wakening of the inner vision.

## I. THE MEDÆVAL WORLD AND THE LIFE OF DANTE

“From heaven his spirit came, and robed in clay,  
The realms of justice and of mercy trod:  
Then rose a living man to gaze on God,  
That he might make the truth as clear as day.  
For that pure star, that brightened with his ray  
The undeserving nest where I was born,  
The whole wide world would be a prize to scorn;  
None but his Maker can due guerdon pay.  
I speak of Dante, whose high work remains  
Unknown, unhonored by that thankless brood,  
Who only to just men deny their wage.  
Were I but he! Born for like lingering pains,  
Against his exile coupled with his good  
I'd gladly change the world's best heritage!”  
—Michael Angelo, *On Dante Alighieri*, translated by Symonds.

“Dante, pacer of the shore  
Where glutton hell disgorgeth filthiest gloom,  
Unbitten by its whirling sulphur-spume—  
Or whence the grieved and obscure waters siope  
Into a darkness quieted by hope;  
Plucker of amaranths grown beneath God's eye  
In gracious twilights where his chosen lie.”

—Browning, *Sordello*, book I, lines 366-372.

### LECTURE OUTLINE

**Introduction.**—Comparison of Dante with other master poets. Unique place of Dante: as the greatest voice of the middle ages, the creator of Italian literature, the unequaled singer at once of the morally terrible and the morally sublime, and the most consciously ethical of all world poets.

The three ways in which such a masterpiece as the *Divine Comedy* may fruitfully be studied: (1) As a creation of beauty; (2) As an embodiment of its epoch; (3) As a concrete study of the permanent



problems, and an expression of the eternal realities of human life. Purpose of this course: to interpret Dante from all three points of view: to respond to the beauty of his poetry, to appreciate the spirit and character of the middle ages, and to give the universal import of his message in terms of our life to-day.

**The Period of Dante.**—Dante born 1265 in Florence; exiled in 1302; died, after 19 years of wandering, at Ravenna in 1321. Dante's life thus at the close and culmination of the middle ages. Character of the thirteenth century: in art, philosophy, life, religious awakening.

Great import in mediæval civilization, and insufficient knowledge and appreciation of it to-day. Vitality and range of its life: strong where we are weak, if weak where we are strong; thus complementary to modern civilization.

**Characteristics of the middle ages.**—The slow development of mediæval civilization out of the chaos following the decline of ancient Rome. The Christian ideal as the center of the new integration of forces. Peculiar spiritual cosmopolitanism in the middle age. Asceticism. The doctrine of the world, the flesh and the devil as opposed to the spiritual life.

Other tendencies in the middle age: the hunger for knowledge; love of war and adventure; feudal loyalty; the chivalrous worship of women.

Thus a vast array of struggling forces in the middle ages. "A great hope had swept across the earth." Deepening of the content of life. Loss of the rounded completeness of Greek art and life. Serenity replaced by struggle, aspiration, fanaticism, depth of life.

**Dante as an expression of the middle age.**—His embodiment of its religious life: gloom, sense of sin; vast spiritual aspiration, mystical union with the divine.

Compare Dante and Goethe in the treatment of sin; so the contrast between mediæval and modern attitudes. Compare with both the Greek æsthetic view of moral evil.

Dante an expression also of the other aspects of mediæval life. The *Divine Comedy* as a glorification of personal love, an expression of chivalrous devotion to womanhood. Thus in Dante a union of all that is best in his epoch. Dante the greatest expression of the middle age because gathering up all that is best in it, and yet rising to the plane of individual genius in the interpretation of life.

**The environment of Dante's youth.**—Condition of Florence in the closing period of the thirteenth century: restless democracy; new artistic awakening; rapid improvements in architecture; constant political strife.

The great lines of political division in Italy: Guelph and Ghibelline.

Effect of the world-struggle of pope and emperor upon Italy. The main conflict complicated by local discords. Bianchi and Neri in Florence. Intensity of party hate and bitterness of civil strife. Corresponding closeness of friendship and neighbor life.

The new art in Florence in the time of Dante's youth. Breaking away from mere religious symbolism and first expression of the great spiritual conceptions in forms beautiful and true to nature. The work of Cimabue and Giotto. The great buildings in Florence begun before Dante's exile.

**The Vita Nuova.**—Dante's earliest book as a precious document expressing his youth. The story of the *Vita Nuova*. Difficulty in its interpretation. Need to think oneself out of the modern into the mediæval point of view to understand this love poem.

Character of mediæval love. Influence of Christianity; of the conditions of feudal society. Resulting view of personal life. Dante's *Vita Nuova* a sublimation of tendencies widely expressed in mediæval love poetry.

**Beatrice.**—The question as to the historical reality of Beatrice. Chief difficulty in solving as arising from the changed views of personal life. Great poetry springing not from the study and from didactic allegory, but from the reality of personal life. Thus human basis in the *Vita Nuova*, far as is the poem from the tendencies of personal life to-day.

**Development of Dante to the time of his exile.**—Dante's studies in poetry and philosophy. His friends: Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, Lapo, Giotto, Casella.

Effect of his first great tragedy upon Dante. Turning to philosophy and to wordly ambitions. His experience in war and statesmanship. Office in Florence.

Dante's marriage. Question as to the character of his married life. Its meaning to him as compared with his love of Beatrice.

**Exile in 1302.**—Causes of Dante's exile. Bitterness of the experience to him; second period of doubt and struggle. Overthrow of worldly ambitions in addition to disappointment in personal life. Effect in driving him back upon himself.

Dante's unavailing efforts to return to Florence. Hope long-deferred making his heart more and more sick. His letter regarding his exile and refusing to return dishonorably.

The long period of homeless wandering; Dante's loneliness; final giving up of the hope of return to Florence. The bitterness of the bread of patronage. Dante's studies at the universities. His life at Padua, Verona, and elsewhere. Final settlement at Ravenna. Last years and death.



The *Divine Comedy* as the fruit of Dante's soul fertilized by suffering. —How poetry came to take for Dante the place of personal relations and objective ambitions. Art as another way of life, a means of finding the love and truth and beauty life had failed to give him. Thus the utter seriousness of the *Divine Comedy*. Dante the hero of his own poem. His study of himself and his own life. Celebration of his love for Beatrice. The extent of his studies as embodied in the *Divine Comedy*. His enshrining in poetry the events and characters of his time.

The personality of Dante as rising above his epoch. Independent study of human life; personal effort at the solution of permanent problems. Both for Dante and for mankind the *Divine Comedy* as, more than any other world-poem, art for life's sake.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Since it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom (wherein I was born and nourished up to the climax of my life, and wherein, by their good leave, I long with all my heart to rest my weary soul, and to end the days allotted to me), through almost every part where her language is spoken I have wandered, a pilgrim, almost a beggar, displaying against my will the wounds of fortune, which are often wont to be imputed unjustly to the wounded one himself. Truly have I been a vessel without sail and without rudder, borne to divers ports and shores and havens by the dry wind that blows from dolorous poverty; and have appeared vile in the eyes of many who, perhaps, through some fame of me, had imagined me in other guise; in whose consideration, not only did I in person suffer abasement, but all my work became of less account, that already done as well as that yet to do.”

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, pp. 11, 12.

‘I come to thee by daytime constantly,  
 But in thy thoughts too much of baseness find:  
 Greatly it grieves me for thy gentle mind,  
 And for thy many virtues gone from thee.  
 It was thy wont to shun much company,  
 Unto all sorry concourse ill inclin’d:  
 And still thy speech of me, heartfelt and kind,  
 Had made me treasure up thy poetry.  
 But now I dare not, for thine abject life,  
 Make manifest that I approve thy rhymes;  
 Nor come I in such sort that thou mayst know.  
 Ah! prithee read this sonnet many times:  
 So shall that evil one who bred this strife  
 Be thrust from thy dishonored soul and go.”

—Guido Cavalcanti to Dante Alighieri, *Sonnet after the Death of Beatrice*, translated by Rossetti, *Dante and His Circle*, p. 105.

"The King by whose rich grace His servants be  
 With plenty beyond measure set to dwell  
 Ordains that I my bitter wrath dispel  
 And lift mine eyes to the great consistory;  
 Till, noting how in glorious choirs agree  
 The citizens of that fair citadel,  
 To the Creator I His creature swell  
 Their song, and all their love possesses me.  
 So when I contemplate the great reward  
 To which our God has called the Christian seed,  
 I long for nothing else but only this.  
 And then my soul is grieved in thy regard,  
 Dear friend, who reck'st not of thy nearest need,  
 Renouncing for slight joys the perfect bliss."

—Dante to Giovanni Quirino, *Answer of Dante saying what he feels at the approach of Death*, translated by Rossetti, *Dante and His Circle*, p. 151.

#### TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. The effect of Dante's sufferings on the character and development of his life.
2. Would the *Divine Comedy* have been possible without the elements of tragedy in Dante's life?
3. The condition of the arts in Florence in the time of Dante.
4. The political condition of Florence in the time of Dante.
5. What view is to be taken of Beatrice and of her influence upon the life of Dante?
6. What view is to be taken of the second lady, love for whom led Dante temporarily away from Beatrice?
7. The character of mediæval love and the causes of its peculiar type.
8. The range and character of Dante's studies as evidenced in the *Divine Comedy*.
9. The ideal of life in the middle age as compared with that of the ancient world.
10. The influence of Saint Francis of Assisi on Italian life and art.
11. What permanent truth and value is there in the mediæval view of sin as compared with ancient and modern attitudes?
12. Dante's relation to the political life of his time.
13. The personal character of Dante.



## REFERENCES.

*Note.*—See the suggestions to students, p. 38, and the general list of books, pp. 39–45. Books starred are of special value in connection with this course; those double-starred are texts for study or are otherwise of first importance.

Dante, \*\* *The New Life*; \**Letters*; \**Banquet*; *De Monarchia*. Brown-  
ing, *Guelphs and Ghibellines*. Butler, \**Dante*, chapters I–V, and Appen-  
dix I. Dinsmore, *Aids to the Study of Dante*, chapters I–V. Federn,  
\**Dante and His Time*. Gardner, *Dante*, chapter I. Hettinger, *Dante's*  
*Divina Commedia*, chapter I. Hogan, *Life and Works of Dante*,  
pp. 1–57, 256–263, 290–298. Howe, *Is Polite Society Polite*, pp. 181–  
202, Dante and Beatrice. Lee, \**Euphorion*, vol. II, pp. 121–217,  
Mediæval Love. Mazzini, *Life and Writings*, vol. IV, pp. 145–208,  
On the Minor Writings of Dante. Moore, \**Dante and His Early Bio-*  
*graphers*; \**Studies in Dante*, second series, chapter II. Mott, *Dante*  
*and Beatrice*. Oliphant, *Makers of Florence*, pp. 1–97, Dante. Patton,  
\**The Personal Character of Dante*. Phillimore, *Dante at Ravenna*.  
Rossetti, D. G., \*\**Dante and His Circle*. Rossetti, M. F., *A Shadow*  
*of Dante*, chapters I–III. Scartazzini, \**A Companion to Dante*; \**Hand-*  
*book*. Smith, \**The Earliest Lives of Dante*. Symonds, *Dantesque and*  
*Platonic Ideals of Love*; \**Introduction to Dante*, chapters I–VIII.  
Toynbee, \**Dante Alighieri*. Villari, *The Two First Centuries of Floren-*  
*tine History*, vol. II, chapters IX, X. Witte, *Essays*, VI–XII, XVI.

## II. THE PROBLEM OF THE DIVINE COMEDY.

"The subject, then, of the whole work, taken according to the letter alone, is simply a consideration of the state of souls after death; for from and around this the action of the whole work turneth. But if the work is considered according to its allegorical meaning, the subject is man, liable to the reward or punishment of justice, according as through the freedom of the will he is deserving or undeserving. . . . Now the kind of philosophy under which we proceed in the whole and in the part is moral philosophy or ethics; because the whole was undertaken not for speculation but for practice."

—Dante, in a *Letter to Can Grande della Scala*, translated by C. S. Latham, *Dante's Eleven Letters*, pp. 197-199.

### LECTURE OUTLINE.

[The purpose of the *Divine Comedy*.—Dante's conscious and avowed ethical intention. His effort to solve the problem of his own life, to find intellectual and moral salvation. His effort to solve the problem for humanity. The creation of a cosmos out of the chaos of elements given by experience. The value of this for mankind.

Dante's effort to see the world 'under the aspect of eternity,' to find the meaning of changing facts of sin and virtue when these have worked out their ultimate significance in the human spirit. Dr. Harris's comparison of the *Divine Comedy* to Michael Angelo's *Last Judgment*.

The interpretation of the *Divine Comedy*.—Dante's intentional allegory; consciously worked out imagery; effect upon the character and value of the poem. Comparison with other great poets in method.

The object of all true interpretation of Dante: to find what he actually did believe and teach about human life. The truth in Dante's three future worlds as drawn from the human world. His meaning discovered when we find the relation of these imagined worlds to the human life we know.

Verse form of the *Divine Comedy*.—Character of Dante's terza rima. Range of music in this meter. Symbolism in the form of the poem.

Canto I.—This canto a general introduction containing the whole

problem of the *Divine Comedy*; hence difficult symbolism. Compare the Prologue in Heaven as an introduction to *Faust*.

The time of beginning the long pilgrimage (Good Friday evening, 1300). Significance of the date: allegorically; in relation to Dante's personal experience.

The dark forest.—In personal life; in the church; in the state. Dante's conception of human existence as revealed in this canto. Slumber at the moment of leaving the true way. The mountain of weary, uninspired struggle, with hope so far away that it shines only upon the summit. Dante's aim not to wail over the bitterness of his experience, but to recount the good he found; contrast Thompson's *City of Dreadful Night*, or parts of Byron.

The three beasts.—Their correspondence to the three great divisions of sins in the *Inferno*; their meaning in relation to Dante's personal life; in relation to the objective world.

The thrusting of Dante back into the forest; the world in chaos; compare the beginning of other great poems.

What is needed in order to find or build again the cosmos. The only way in which Dante can accomplish this: the journey through the three worlds of the *Divine Comedy*, and the learning of the lesson of each.

The saving truths.—The lesson of the *Inferno*: sin is death. True as long as there is the spiritual attitude of hate of the good.

The lesson of the *Purgatorio*: suffering for sin brings purification when the soul is turned toward God.

The lesson of the *Paradiso*: life is a positive and spontaneous reception of God's light and love.

The truth of each of these lessons in the ordinary human world. The way in which they bring order out of chaos. To find the truth one must not flinch from facing the full meaning of the facts of sin and suffering.

The guides.—Reasons for the choice of Virgil. The two worlds through which Virgil can lead Dante. How the unaided human understanding can learn and teach the lessons of these worlds.

The higher guide necessary in the *Paradiso*; the significance of this. The higher positive life which can be known only in living. Compare the life of the understanding with that of appreciation. The type of human experience symbolized in the *Paradiso*. Significance of the choice of Beatrice as a symbol.

The third guide who becomes necessary for the last achievement. His meaning in relation to the other two.

The question whether it is necessary for all to travel the road Dante follows in order to find the truth of life.



The meaning of the three worlds evident in Dante's progress through them. How this fact gives an absolute spiritual significance to the *Divine Comedy*.

**Canto II.**—The time of day when the journey begins: meaning. Dante's hesitation; Virgil's condemnation of this as cowardice. The necessity of action and the danger of too much thinking.

The first picture of Beatrice. The "eternal womanly" in Dante; compare Goethe and Browning. Depth of personal feeling in Dante; yet restraint in its expression. Love as the cause and goal of the whole progress. The eyes of Beatrice; significance as a symbol.

The spiritual universe behind Dante's undertaking. Entering upon "the deep and savage way."

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"We should know that books can be understood, and ought to be explained, in four principal senses. One is called *literal*, and this it is which goes no further than the letter, such as the simple narration of the thing of which you treat. \* \* The second is called *allegorical*, and this is the meaning hidden under the cloak of fables, and is a truth concealed beneath a fair fiction. \* \*

The third sense is called *moral*; and this readers should carefully gather from all writings, for the benefit of themselves and their descendants. \* \*

The fourth sense is called *anagogical*, that is, beyond sense. \* \*

And in such demonstration, the literal sense should always come first, as that whose meaning includes all the rest, and without which it would be impossible and irrational to understand the others; and above all would it be impossible with the allegorical. Because in everything which has an inside and an outside, it is impossible to get at the inside, if we have not first got at the outside. Wherefore, as in books the literal sense is always the outside, it is impossible to get at the other, especially the allegorical, without first getting at the literal."

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, pp. 51-54.

"Because the master of our life, Aristotle, recognized this arch of which we speak, he appears to consider our life as an ascent and a descent; wherefore he says, in the place where he treats of youth and old age, that youth is no other than an increase of life. Where the highest point of this arch is, it were difficult to say, on account of the inequalities before mentioned; but in most men, I believe, it is between the thirtieth and fortieth year. And I believe that in perfect natures it would be in the thirty-fifth year. And this reason affects me, that our Saviour Christ, whose nature was perfect, chose to die in the thirty-fourth year of His age, because it did not befit Divinity to decline."

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, pp. 346, 347.

"Let all observe that nothing harmonized by the laws of the Muses can be changed from its own tongue to another one without destroying all its sweetness and harmony."

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, p. 25.

#### TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. The use and interpretation of allegory in mediæval literature.
2. What is the meaning of each of Dante's three guides, and why is the succession of them necessary?
3. What does Beatrice symbolize to Dante in Cantos I and II?
4. Compare Canto I with the Prologue in Heaven to Goethe's *Faust*.
5. Why was Dante's pilgrimage necessary?
6. How far is a similar struggle to find the truth necessary in human life generally?
7. Compare the stars and the eyes of Beatrice in Dante's symbolism.
8. What is the meaning of the three beasts of sin?
9. What effect has the conscious use of allegory upon the character and value of Dante's work?
10. What effect has Dante's ethical purpose upon the character and value of his work?
11. Compare the poetic method of Dante with that of Shakespeare and Goethe.
12. What peculiar features have the introductory cantos of the *Divine Comedy* as compared with the opening portions of other great poems?

#### REFERENCES.

Dante, *\*\*Inferno*, Cantos I, II; also *Illustrations to the Inferno* in Longfellow's translation; *\*Letters*, translated by Latham, pp. 187–216. Carroll, *Exiles of Eternity*, chapters I, II. Comparetti, *\*Vergil in the Middle Ages*, pp. 195–231. Dinsmore, *Aids to the Study of Dante*, chapter VI; *Teachings of Dante*, pp. 47–73. Goethe, *Faust*, Prologue in Heaven. Harris, *Spiritual Sense of Dante's Divina Commedia*, sections 1, 2, 39–44. Hettinger, *Dante's Divina Commedia*, chapter II. Hogan, *Life and Works of Dante*, pp. 58–67. Lindsay, *Essays*, pp. 3–36. Moore, *Studies in Dante*, second series, chapter I. Rossetti, *\*Shadow of Dante*, chapter IV. Scartazzini, *Companion to Dante*, pp. 440–463; *Handbook*, part II, chapter IV. Schaff, *Literature and Poetry*, pp. 279–429. Symonds, *Introduction to Dante*, chapter IV. Vernon, *\*Readings on the Inferno of Dante*, Introduction, Prolegomena and comments on Cantos I and II. Witte, *\*Essays*, I–IV, XIII. Wyld, *The Dread Inferno*, pp. 1–40.

### III. THE INFERNO.

“Quando risposi, cominciai: Oh lasso!  
Quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio  
Menò costoro al doloroso passo!

Ed ella a me: Nessun maggior dolore,  
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice  
Nella miseria; e ciò sa'l tuo dottore.”

—Dante, *Inferno*, Canto V.

“Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not if we enter into the clefts of the mountains, is there known a spot in the whole world where a man might be freed from an evil deed.”

—Sayings of Buddha, *The Dhammapada*, translated by F. Max Müller p. 35.

“I sent my Soul through the Invisible,  
Some letter of that After-life to spell:  
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,  
And answer'd 'I Myself am Heav'n and Hell:'

“Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,  
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire  
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,  
So late emerg'd from, shall so soon expire.”

—Fitzgerald, *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, stanzas LXVI and LXVII.

### LECTURE OUTLINE.

Introduction.—Necessity for Dante to face the nature and meaning of sin to find again a moral world. So the pilgrimage through the Inferno a study of the various forms of moral degeneration to learn the lesson of each and pass on. Dante seeking life and not death.

Canto III: the inscription over the gate of Hell.—Its profound meaning. Necessity, if life is to mean harmony with God's will, that sin should be death. Thus hell the corollary of the positive truth and love of the universe. The modern biological emphasis of this truth; the fact of progress as involving the possibility of retrogression. Thus



the meaning in the creation of hell by Love and Wisdom. The sense in which hell is eternal. Stern truths in Dante; reproof to the modern attitude which too often glosses over the ulcers of sin with the varnish of sentimentality. The ways in which Dante's conception of hell requires modification.

**The cowardly virtuous.**—Dante's attitude toward the souls who were neither good nor bad. Expression in this of his character.

**The imagery of the Inferno.**—Dante's intense visualizing quality. Association of appropriate music with his imagery. Intentional use of lower images as Dante descends the Inferno.

Significance of Dante's treatment of characters from Greek and Latin mythology on the same plane with those from Christian tradition.

The cursing by the lost souls of God, the human world and all causes of their sin except their own evil choice. Expression in this of the inevitable attitude where sin has become objective fate.

**Canto IV: the lost through ignorance.**—Seeming injustice, yet truth to human experience in Dante's view. Compare the tragedy of the fate of circumstances.

Long catalogue of the great and wise of old. Illustration of Dante's effort at exhaustive description. His struggle to realize everything clearly to the imagination.

**Canto V: the first circle of positive sin.**—This canto unexcelled in human tenderness and in beauty, and also typical of Dante's treatment of sin and punishment. Significance of the black air on which those guilty of unrestrained passion are swept hither and thither.

**Francesca da Rimini.**—"Infinite pity but infinite rigor of law" in Dante. His view of the character of Francesca. The ethical paradox involved in his presentation of her. The tender and appealing womanliness of Francesca. Dante's effort to see the meaning of the particular sin rather than the whole working out of the character of the woman. Illustration in this of a fundamental limitation in Dante's plan. Dante's approximation to what would be the ultimate *Divine Comedy* greatest in his paradoxical portrayal of Francesca da Rimini.

Wonderful expression of Dante's poetic power in Canto V. Character of the imagery; of the music. Illustration of the general relation of elements of poetic form to the subjects of the *Inferno*.

**Cantos VI-IX.**—Other sins of incontinence: gluttony; avarice and prodigality; anger and sullenness. How with each of these the punishment is the condition that is the sin itself with an added consciousness of it on the part of the sinner.

Conception of the angel in Canto IX; relation to human life. The heretics: relative truth in Dante's view and in the modern attitude.

**Canto XI: the classification of sins in the Inferno.**—Importance of the

explanations given in this canto. Dante's view of the degree of wickedness in different sins; source and value of his conceptions. Significance of the Aristotelian character of his classification.

Inevitable artificiality involved in the nature of Dante's plan. Isolation of a particular element of sin or virtue, and effort to see its ultimate meaning. Contrast human life, where a single individual displays a great variety of these elements. Results of Dante's method.

**Cantos XII-XVI.**—The meaning of the new element in the punishment of the violent. Reaction of the universe upon those sinning against it.

Statue of the old man symbolizing human history. Meaning of the fact that the rivers of hell flow from the parts of this statue.

**Cantos XVII-XXIII: the sins of fraud.**—Dante's view of fraud as the sin possible only to man, and consisting in the depravity of what is peculiarly human. The character of the punishment: in the case of the seducers, simoniacs, soothsayers, barrators, hypocrites.

Dante's increasing use of words and images suggesting describing these lower types of sin: artistic signi-

**Canto XXVI: the story of Ulysses.**—

general view of sin; illustration of Tennyson's *Ulysses*.

**Cantos XXXII-XXXIV: the story of Francesca.**—The punishment as compared with that of the other sinners. Change in Dante's attitude. The story of Ugolino. Human tragedy here; compare the story of Francesca. The significance of such episodes in reference to the imaginative vitality of Dante's work.

Dante's description of Satan as compared with that of Milton. The reason for associating Brutus and Cassius with Judas.

Dante's theory of the earth and of gravitation. The passage through which he "came forth to behold the stars."

**The meaning of the Inferno.**—Significance in regarding hell as eternal. The progressive element furnished by Dante's progress through each circle. How he learns the lesson of each sin, and passes on.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

'Per me si va nella città dolente:  
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore:  
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.  
Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto Fattore:  
Fecemi la divina Potestate,  
La somma Sapienza e 'l primo Amore.  
Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,  
Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro:  
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate."  
—*Inferno*, Canto III: inscription over the gate of hell.



(Note: the following translations of the above inscription illustrate fairly well some of the different methods of rendering the Divine Comedy into English.)

"Through me is the way into the woeful city; through me is the way into eternal woe; through me is the way among the lost people. Justice moved my high Creator: the divine Power, the supreme Wisdom and the primal Love made me. Before me were no things created, unless eternal, and I eternal last. Leave every hope, ye who enter."

—Translation by Norton.

"Through me you pass into the city of woe:  
Through me you pass into eternal pain:  
Through me among the people lost for aye.  
Justice the founder of my fabric moved:  
To rear me was the task of power divine,  
Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.  
Before me things create were none, save things  
Eternal, and eternal I endure.  
All hope abandon ye who enter here."

—Translation by Cary.

Justice ...  
And Power Divine  
And Wisdom Infinite ...  
Save things eternal, was created naught  
Before myself, eternal I and drear.  
All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

—Translation by Wiltach.

"Through me the way is to the city dolent;  
Through me the way is to eternal dole;  
Through me the way among the people lost.  
Justice incited my sublime Creator;  
Created me divine Omnipotence,  
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.  
Before me there were no created things,  
Only eterne, and I eternal last.  
All hope abandon ye who enter in."

—Translation by Longfellow.

"Through me you reach the City of Despair:  
Through me eternal wretchedness ye find:  
Through me among perdition's tribe ye fare:  
Justice inspired my lofty founder's mind:  
Power, love, and wisdom, heavenly, first, most high,  
Created me. Before me naught had been  
Save things eternal, and eterne am I:  
Leave here all hope, O ye who enter in."

—Translation by Parsons.

"Through me ye pass into the city of woe;  
 Through me ye pass to endless misery;  
 Through me ye pass where the lost spirits go.—  
 In Justice my High Maker founded me.  
 Almighty Power, Supremest Sapiency  
 And Love Primeval built me: naught before,  
 Saving the things that Everlasting be,  
 Was made, and I endure for Evermore.  
 All hope abandon ye who enter at this Door."  
 —Translation by Musgrave.

"Through me you pass into the city of woe:  
 Through me you pass into eternal pain:  
 Through me among the people lost you go.  
 Justice my ancient Builder did constrain:  
 By Power divine my city's walls arose,  
 By Highest Wisdom and Love's primal reign.  
 Before me things create were none, but those  
 Eternal, and eternal I endure:  
 All hope abandon whom my walls enclose."

—Translation to show the rhyme form of the original, by Edward Howard Griggs.

#### TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. What are the principles involved in the punishment of the sins in the first division of the *Inferno*? In the second division? In the third division?
2. What was Dante's purpose in the *Inferno*?
3. Is there any justification for the eternal character of Dante's Hell?
4. What are the characteristics of Dante's poetry in the *Inferno*?
5. What passages of the *Inferno* have the deepest human interest, and why?
6. What development came to Dante by passing through the *Inferno*?
7. Why do not the characters whom Dante meets in the *Inferno* get a similar development through their experiences?
8. Compare Dante's treatment of hell with Milton's.
9. Compare Tennyson's *Ulysses* with the description in Canto XXVI.
10. What portions of the *Inferno* have the greatest ethical value, and why?
11. Compare Dante's treatment of sin and punishment with Goethe's; with Shakespeare's.

12. What effect did Dante mean to produce by his portrayal of Francesca da Rimini? What effect has he actually produced?
13. Compare the different translations, given above, of the inscription over the gate of hell.

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#### IV. THE PURGATORIO.

“Questa gente, che preme a noi, è molta,  
E vengonti a pregar, disse 'l Poeta;  
Però pur va', ed in andando ascolta.”

—*Purgatorio*, Canto V.

“Pensa che questo dì mai non raggiorna.”

—*Purgatorio*, Canto XII.

“By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself, no one can purify another.

“Let no one forget his own duty for the sake of another's, however great; let a man, after he has discerned his own duty, be always attentive to his duty. \* \* \*

“If anything is to be done, let a man do it, let him attack it vigorously! A careless pilgrim only scatters the dust of his passions more widely.”

—Sayings of Buddha, *The Dhammapada*, translated by F. Max Müller, pp. 46, 75.

**Introduction.**—Change in the mood and spirit of the poem with the passing to the world of light. Suffering in the *Purgatorio*, but all ending in life; hence pain gladly accepted. Relative value, poetically and ethically, of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*.

**The truth of the *Purgatorio*.**—Hell and Heaven abstractions, or permanent expressions of certain human tendencies worked out to the extreme; Purgatory as true to the actual human world. Our life not a heaven of realization, nor a hell of failure and death, but a purgatory of endless climbing.

**Dante's emphasis of the human will.** Cato as the symbol of liberty attained through conscious effort; significance in choosing a pagan. The four stars of the virtues of action. Girding with the reed of humility; this as the first step toward the divine.

**The imagery of the *Purgatorio*.**—New qualities. The imagery of light; need of study to appreciate it. Tenderness and sweetness of the poetry. The description of the angel and the boat in Canto II. The beginning of Canto VIII. Aspects of nature loved by Dante.

**The souls at the foot of the mountain.**—The dead weight of unused or misused yesterdays, preventing action.

Dante's recognition of his friend. The reproof of enjoyment when the time is for action.

The crowd of souls "who only pray that some one else may pray." Virgil's advice: "So still go onward and in going listen." Union of the great task with helpfulness by the way.

The great number of human touches. The sweet beauty of hope; contrast the spirit here and in the *Inferno*.

**Canto VI.**—The question concerning prayer. The truth in Virgil's answer: how love can fulfil the law. The two elements which enter into every problem of action; change in the whole problem through altering either element.

The meeting of Virgil and Sordello. The great variety of dramatic characters and situations in Dante, furnishing subjects and inspiration for other works.

**Cantos VII, VIII.**—Impossibility of climbing during the night. The three stars of the theological virtues; Dante's view of these virtues as compared with the virtues of action.

**The structure of Purgatory.**—The seven terraces of sin. Principle of classification of the sins of Purgatory (see Canto XVII). Love the principle: (1) Sin of loving a part of the good too much or out of relation to the whole; (2) Sin of loving the good too little; (3) Sins of perverted love. Contrast the classification of sins in the *Inferno*. The sins of the Purgatorio as presenting spiritual conditions which, unchecked, would work out into the forms of moral degeneration punished in the *Inferno*.

**Punishments of the Purgatorio.**—Adjustment of punishments to sins in the Purgatorio. The new element of penance. The reasons why punishment is reformatory in the Purgatorio but not in the *Inferno*. The true spiritual difference between the two worlds the way the soul is turned. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

The "bridle" and the "call."—Teaching of the meaning of the sin and inspiring of the opposite virtue. Beauty of these elements of moral regeneration in Dante. The song that celebrates the freeing of the soul from each type of sin. Dante's use of music in the *Purgatorio*.

**Cantos X, XI: Pride.**—Illustration of the ethical teaching of the *Purgatorio*. Dante's need of penance for the sin of pride. The statues and pavement on this terrace. Further illustrations of the treatment of sin and punishment in the *Purgatorio*: in the case of sloth (Canto XVIII); avarice (Canto XIX); gluttony (Canto XXIII); licentiousness (Cantos XXV, XXVI). Possibility of a soul doing penance on several terraces.

**Canto XV.**—Explanation of the law of the spiritual world as contrasting with the natural world. How spiritual goods increase by sharing them. The law of love.

**Cantos XX, XXI.**—The trembling of the mountain when a soul attains salvation; Virgil's explanation. Expression of the absolute unity of the spiritual interests of mankind. The type of truths which find explanation in the *Purgatorio*.

**Canto XXVII: The final purification.**—The night spent upon the last stairs. Dante's dream of Leah and Rachel; symbols of what is to follow.

**Virgil's final charge.**—Intellect and art have taught their lessons. The will and the desire are in perfect harmony with the will of God; hence perfect freedom.

The peace and serenity breathing through the close of Canto XXVII. Henceforth progress is to be, not through conscious effort, but through spontaneous desire. Expression here of the only perfecting of which human nature is capable.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Morality is the beauty of philosophy. \* \* \* \* Deeds are the beauty of the soul.”

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, pp. 216, 217.

“Therefore, when we say man *lives*, we ought to mean, he uses his reason, which is his special life, and the act of his noblest part. Whence he who gives up the use of his reason, and lives only in the life of the senses, lives not as a man, but as a beast.”

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, pp. 85, 86.

“All men on whom the Higher Nature has stamped the love of truth should especially concern themselves in laboring for posterity, in order that future generations may be enriched by their efforts, as they themselves were made rich by the efforts of generations past. For that man who is imbued with public teachings, but cares not to contribute something to the public good, is far in arrears of his duty, let him be assured.”

—Dante, *De Monarchia*, translated by Aurelia Henry, p. 3.

“The temporal fire and the eternal,  
Son, thou hast seen, and to a place art come  
Where of myself no farther I discern.  
By intellect and art I here have brought thee;  
Take thine own pleasure for thy guide henceforth;  
Beyond the steep ways and the narrow art thou.



Behold the sun, that shines upon thy forehead;  
 Behold the grass, the flowerets, and the shrubs  
 Which of itself alone this land produces.  
 Until rejoicing come the beauteous eyes  
 Which weeping caused me to come unto thee,  
 Thou canst sit down, and thou canst walk among them.  
 Expect no more or word or sign from me;  
 Free and upright and sound is thy free-will,  
 And error were it not to do its bidding;  
 Thee o'er thyself I therefore crown and mitre!"

—Last charge of Virgil to Dante, *Purgatorio*, Canto XXVII, Longfellow's translation.

### TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Compare the principles in the punishment of sins in the *Purgatorio* and the *Inferno*.
2. What makes the punishments of the *Purgatorio* reformativ?
3. Dante's method of classifying the sins of the *Purgatorio*.
4. Contrast the imagery of the *Purgatorio* with that of the *Inferno*.
5. Dante's use of nature-imagery.
6. Music in the *Purgatorio*.
7. For what sins does Dante do penance, and what does this show with reference to his life?
8. Why is a pagan chosen as guardian of the mountain of purification?
9. What differences are there in the ethical teachings of the *Purgatorio* and the *Inferno*?
10. What is the relative measure of truth to actual life in Dante's conception of purgatory and hell?
11. The type of spiritual problems studied in the *Purgatorio*.
12. The fundamental lesson of the *Purgatorio*.

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## V. THE TWO TYPES OF PARADISE.

"And she began, lighting me with a smile  
Such as would make one happy in the fire."  
—*Paradiso*, Canto VII.

"Through joy effulgence is acquired above,  
As here a smile; but down below, the shade  
Outwardly darkens, as the mind is sad."  
—*Paradiso*, Canto IX.

"Laughter is common enough among the Rakshasas (the demons); they are amused by the sight of suffering; and as there is plenty of that in the world, they have many occasions for mirth. They can, too, grin maliciously, and curl the lip with a scornful sneer; but to smile is not given to these demons. The Smile is the transfiguration of the countenance which beholds the Ideal; the Rakshasas have no such vision. It is the radiant Flash which follows the meeting of three sentiments—Love, Pity, Desire; these feelings are not much in vogue among the Rakshasas. Finally, in the Smile is always hidden a memory of past tears; the Rakshasas have no such memories,—for they cannot weep."

—Frederika Richardson, *The Iliad of the East* (paraphrase from the Rāmāyana), p. 108.

## LECTURE OUTLINE.

**Introduction.**—The great difficulty art meets in attempting to represent the adequate answer to human desire. The two ways of striving to achieve this: (1) Nature and human life presented free from all defects and blemishes; (2) The portrayal of the transcendent and supernatural.

Compare the two methods in sculpture, painting, poetry. Inadequacy of the result of the second method, since there are no sufficient symbols of the transcendent, and art must appeal through the senses to the soul. Dante's use of both methods in succession.

**The Terrestrial Paradise.**—The closing cantos of the *Purgatorio* (XXVIII-XXXIII) presenting the first and more satisfying type of heaven. Exquisite beauty of the garden. The two worlds of hard



climbing as making possible the spontaneous enjoyment of the beautiful in a purified material world. The journey begun in the dark forest of doubt, ending in the sweet forest of rest and peace, transfigured by the shining revelation of Beatrice. Truth to human life in this earthly heaven; satisfying character as compared with the celestial heavens. The garden as a symbol of the resting time between two series of actions. Compare Rabbi Ben Ezra's view of old age.

Matilda the symbol of the active life of virtue as Beatrice of the higher contemplative union with God. Compare Martha and Mary. "Some people pay their way in this world by what they do, others by what they are." Matilda gathering the flowers of virtue; Beatrice the most beautiful flower of humanity in God's Garden.

The triumphal procession of the Church; significance of the mystical symbolism. Meaning of the fact that Virgil is as ignorant as Dante of what occurs here.

**Appearance of Beatrice.**—Descent of Beatrice in the cloud of flowers. Marvelous poetry. Value of the color symbolism as well as the nature imagery.

**Departure of Virgil.**—Tender pathos in Virgil's departure without farewell. Christian courtesy of his action; paradox of his fate. Yet truth to human life. Compare Caponsacchi at the close of his story in *The Ring and the Book*.

Contrast the heavenly Beatrice and the human Virgil: the question which appeals the more strongly to us. How far Beatrice answers the heart-warm human love. Contrast Beatrice and Francesca da Rimini. The love that demands the best of the loved one in comparison with that which blindly gives in answer to desire. The deep pathos of Dante's life with its long years of heart-hunger as beneath all the spiritual and ethical symbolism of the *Divine Comedy*. Dante's stern reserve in the expression of his personal life.

**The confession.**—Stern reproof by Beatrice. The sins Dante acknowledges. The question whether the confession is personal or merely allegorical.

The look into the eyes of Beatrice: satisfaction of Dante's "ten-year-long thirst." Significance in choosing an individual from personal life, instead of some figure in the history of the Church, as a symbol of the higher leading.

**Lethe and Eunoë.**—The river of forgetfulness and the river of remembrance. Evil and pain in one without the other. Significance that Eunoë is Dante's own invention. Truth to experience in these exquisite symbols: forgetting the bitterness of yesterday's agony and eternalizing the truth of yesterday's experience, in actual human life.

Dante now "pure and disposed to mount unto the stars."

**The Celestial Paradise.**—Dante's second attempt to represent the complete answer to the human heart. Unique place of Dante's *Paradiso* among all poems dealing with what transcends human experience. The usual identification of symbol and concept. Dante's effort to avoid this by creating one symbol only to annul it with a higher. Thus Dante approximating the method of music—the one art capable of expressing the emotions associated with conceptions of the transcendent and the infinite. All attempts to portray the infinite and transcendent in artistic (i.e. limited) form doomed to failure. Yet Dante's failure the most wonderful achievement in the poetry of the sublime.

**Structure of paradise.**—The heavens of the planets and stars in which appear in ascending circles the souls of the saved. Dante's statement that this appearance merely indicates the relative nearness of the different groups to the divine. Higher vision of paradise as a river of light with flames and flowers. Still higher vision of the angelic circles and the rose of the blessed. Final effort in the Beatific Vision to represent what transcends form.

Dante's realization of the difficulty of his final undertaking. Impossibility of retelling the highest truth when one has descended from the vision of it. Truth here to the highest phases of human experience: the heaven of personal love, the spontaneous reception of beauty, cannot be translated into terms of the understanding. Dante's hope merely to give "the shadow of the blessed realm."

**Imagery of the Paradiso.**—Dante's constant use of a few highest symbols in the *Paradiso*: compare especially light, music, motion. Spiritual significance of these. Compare with these the characteristic imagery of the *Purgatorio* and the *Inferno*.

[Yet to bind all the transcendent symbolism to the earth life, constant use of the smile in the eyes of Beatrice to express Dante's personal heaven. The deeper meaning in the human smile than in the resplendent shining of all the angels of paradise.]

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Thus it appears that our Beatitude, that is, this happiness of which we are speaking, we may first find *imperfectly* in the active life (that is, in the exercise of the moral virtues), and then almost *perfectly* [in the contemplative life, that is] in the exercise of the intellectual virtues. Which two operations are unimpeded and most direct ways to lead us to the supreme Beatitude, that cannot be obtained here, as appears by what has been said."

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, pp. 343, 344.



"The water which thou seest springs not from vein  
 Restored by vapor that the cold condenses,  
 Like to a stream that gains or loses breath;  
 But issues from a fountain safe and certain,  
 Which by the will of God as much regains  
 As it discharges, open on two sides.  
 Upon this side with virtue it descends,  
 Which takes away all memory of sin;  
 On that, of every good deed done restores it.  
 Here Lethe, as upon the other side  
 Eunoë, it is called; and worketh not  
 If first on either side it be not tasted.  
 This every other savor doth transcend.

\* \* \* \* \*

Those who in ancient times have feigned in song  
 The Age of Gold and its felicity,  
 Dreamed of this place perhaps upon Parnassus.  
 Here was the human race in innocence;  
 Here evermore was Spring, and every fruit;  
 This is the nectar of which each one speaks."  
 —*Purgatorio*, Canto XXVIII, Longfellow's translation.

"We must understand that everything desires above all its own  
 perfection; and in this finds every desire satisfied, and for this all  
 things are desired. And this is the desire which ever makes all desires  
 seem incomplete; for no pleasure of life is great enough to so take  
 away the thirst of our soul, that this desire just spoken of shall not  
 remain in the mind."

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, pp. 163,  
 164.

### TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. What difficulties must art meet in attempting to represent the perfect answer to human desire?
2. In what different ways can art attempt to portray a satisfying heaven? What is the value of each method?
3. Which of the fine arts can most nearly reveal the infinite, and why?
4. Compare sculpture, painting, poetry and music in their power to represent the answer to human desire.
5. Why does the terrestrial paradise come in the *Purgatorio* instead of in the *Paradiso*?
6. What light does Dante's confession throw upon his life?
7. How far are Lethe and Eunoë symbols of anything in ordinary human experience?
8. Compare Beatrice and Francesca da Rimini as types of womanhood.

9. Compare the love expressed by Beatrice with that shown by Francesca da Rimini: which is better, and why?
10. Dante's view of the relative excellence of the active and the contemplative life.
11. Compare Dante's nature-imagery with that in English poetry.
12. The value of the artistic symbols by which Dante strives to represent the transcendent in the *Paradiso*.
13. How does Dante succeed in avoiding monotony in the *Paradiso*?
14. Wherein lies the peculiar excellence of Dante as poet of the sublime?

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## VI. THE PARADISO AND THE BEATIFIC VISION.

"His will is our peace."

—*Paradiso*, Canto III.

"Hence we clearly understand that our salvation, or blessedness, or liberty consists in a constant and eternal love toward God, or in the love of God toward men. This love or blessedness is called Glory in the sacred writings, and not without reason. For whether it be related to God or to the mind, it may properly be called repose of mind, which is, in truth, not distinguished from glory. For in so far as it is related to God, it is joy (granting that it is allowable to use this word), accompanied with the idea of Himself, and it is the same thing when it is related to the mind."

—Spinoza, *Ethic*, translated by W. Hale White, fifth part, proposition XXXVI.

"Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing broader, nothing more pleasant, nothing better either in heaven or earth, because love is born of God; and rising above all created things, can find its rest in Him alone."

—Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, book III, chapter V.

"Alles Vergängliche  
Ist nur ein Gleichniss;  
Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereigniss;  
Das Unbeschreibliche,  
Hier ist es gethan;  
Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan."

—Goethe, closing mystical chorus to *Faust*.

### LECTURE OUTLINE.

Ethical teachings of the *Paradiso*.—Lessons of love, freedom, spiritual life. Aristotle's four causes and Plato's theory of the soul. Theological teachings. View of God as the end and aim of the soul. Compare with these the lessons of sin and death in the *Inferno*; of spiritual struggle and moral progress in the *Purgatorio*. Relative value of the three types of ethical teaching.

**The joy of paradise.**—Dante's solution of the problem how there can be perfect happiness and contentment for a soul with a higher heaven above yet unattained. Need, as in the *Inferno*, of some divine alchemy to fix the soul and stop the growth through satisfaction to larger desire, in order that such contentment may be possible. How Dante's human discontent and struggle up toward the ever higher contrasts with the placid satisfaction of the souls in the various heavens. Relative value of the two attitudes.

**The seven heavens of the planets.**—Significance of the order in which Dante ranks the good types of character. Compare the classification of sins in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*.

Increase in the beauty of Beatrice as she and Dante ascend from heaven to heaven. Significance that this is the chief indication to Dante of his spiritual progress. The personal love never lost by Dante. Without Beatrice no beatitude. Thus the light, love, music, motion of the universe gathered up and revealed in one loved smile, in the accents of one loved voice.

**The heaven of the fixed stars.**—The look back upon the earth; the true perspective of such a vision; value in the spiritual life.

Dante's examination in faith and love. Preparation for the last flight.

**The angels.**—Dante's teaching concerning the angels; sources; value as carried out here. Relation of theological to poetical elements. Marvelous use of the imagery of light to express the sublime. Compare other poetic attempts. Relation of Dante's angels to humanity. Compare with the angels of paradise the angel sent in the *Inferno* (Canto IX) to open the gates of the nether hell.

Explanation of the contrast between the heavenly hierarchy, where the smallest circle moves most swiftly, and the heavens of the planets and stars, where the largest and outermost displays this quality. Dante's power to appeal to the imagination without degrading a spiritual subject with sensuous elements.

Significance that Dante ranks intelligence above feeling: compare Spinoza.

**Ascent to the Empyrean.**—All the difficulty and, at the same time, beauty of the *Paradiso* gathered up and intensified in the closing cantos. These cantos as representing the culmination of the poetry of the sublime in the literature of the whole world, and holding the same relation to the *Paradiso* which the cantos of the terrestrial paradise sustain to the *Purgatorio*.

Final praise of Beatrice (Canto XXX). Transfiguration of her countenance with the ascent to the heaven of pure light. Her closing explanation of the symbolism of light, love and joy.



**The vision of paradise.**—The river of light as the breast of God; the flowers adorning it as souls of the saved; the sparks rising from the river and sinking into the flowers as angels bringing joy to human souls.

Change in the vision: the Rose of the Blessed, penetrated by the angels. Marvelous beauty of the "convent of the white stoles." Relative rest of the human choir, motion of the angelic one. Central impressions of the imagery: harmony, beauty, light, love. Dante's power to multiply light into light in the *Paradiso* as wonderful as in the *Inferno* his ability to represent one black deep below another. Yet with all the sweep and power of his imagination avoidance of identifying the divine with anything appealing to the senses—even light.

**Withdrawal of Beatrice.**—Departure of Beatrice, like Virgil, without farewell. Contrast Dante's tears at the going of "sweet father Virgil" with the joyous prayer here and the last smile with which Beatrice answers it. In this prayer Dante's crowning exaltation of "the eternal womanly." Compare Goethe and Browning.

**The new guide.**—Reasons for replacing Beatrice by St. Bernard as the guide to the final vision of God. The gateway to paradise the one of the divine world nearest the individual spirit; the mediator to the highest union the one of the human world nearest the divine.

**Mary and the angel of the annunciation.**—Dante's description as compared with Italian painting. Exhaustless resources of his poetic power. Each height seems highest until surpassed by a higher.

Permanent significance in the mediæval adoration of Mary.

**Canto XXXIII: the culminating song.**—St. Bernard's prayer to the Virgin. Dante's effort to gather up in it all the paradoxes of mystical faith.

**The Beatific Vision.**—Desire ending in perfect realization of its answer. Dante's inability to tell what he saw. Conscious only of the sweetness that continues to distil from the vision that is gone. Truth here to all highest human experiences.

What Dante saw: all the infinite variety of the universe as bound together in one unity by love. The two types of recognition of truth: (1) Synthesis of facts from without; (2) Appreciation of creative forces from within. Compare Aristotle and Plato. Dante's vision a recognition of the ultimate unity as creative energy from which flow all the forms of the universe. Compare Faust's aspiration in scene I.

Type of mysticism in Dante: that which follows, not precedes, the struggle for clear scientific knowledge. Contrast the vicious mysticism of intellectual laziness, abroad in these days. Compare the mysticism of St. Francis of Assisi.

Perfect satisfaction in the Beatific Vision. God as the end of the soul. Suggestion of the human form in the light of the vision. How Dante succeeds in indicating the likeness of the human and the divine without degrading or sensualizing the divine.

The joy expressed by motion, not by the rest of inaction. The perfect circular motion, fusing centripetal and centrifugal forces, unifying the thirst for God and the hunger for permanent individuality in one harmony that is both rest and action.

The Beatific Vision as a symbol of perfected human action where there is ceaseless progress in God; as a symbol of those rare moments of joyous inspiration which come in human life. Descent from the heights to the dull area of daily life, to the common chord again. Compare *Abt Vogler*. Need to carry the vision across the valley, to live the inspiration out in the dull wastes of life which follow. What the Beatific Vision must have meant to homeless Dante, wandering over the world seeking for his proud, hot soul—peace!

Conclusion.—Dante as the poet of the morally terrible; of ethical progress; of the spiritually sublime. Relative value of the three aspects of his work. Compare the work of other poets in similar fields. Reasons for the peculiar excellence of Dante.

Dante's intense faith in his theological and mystical teachings. Extent to which the world has passed away from his point of view. Yet permanent truth in the older teachings; need for us to see their unchanging reality.

Thus the permanent vitality of the *Divine Comedy*. Its significance: as a poem; as an embodiment of the mediæval world; as a profound study of the eternal problems of human life.

Life the basis of all great art. All earnest living absolute in meaning. Thus art the expression and interpretation of life for the sake of life. The chaos of the present world; the cosmos it means. Vicarious atonement of the artist. Thus the meaning of Dante: for himself; for his age; for our time; for all mankind.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"To my right side I turned myself around,  
My duty to behold in Beatrice  
Either by words or gesture signified;  
And so translucent I beheld her eyes,  
So full of pleasure, that her countenance  
Surpassed its other and its latest wont.  
And as, by feeling greater delectation,  
A man in doing good from day to day  
Becomes aware his virtue is increasing,



So I became aware that my gyration  
With heaven together had increased its arc.  
That miracle beholding more adorned."

—*Paradiso*, Canto XVIII, Longfellow's translation.

"Glory be to the Father, to the Son,  
And Holy Ghost!' all Paradise began,  
So that the melody inebriate made me.  
What I beheld seemed unto me a smile  
Of the universe; for my inebriation  
Found entrance through the hearing and the sight.  
O joy! O gladness inexpressible!  
O perfect life of love and peacefulness!  
O riches without hankering secure!"

—*Paradiso*, Canto XXVII, Longfellow's translation.

"It is of the intention of God that all things should represent the divine likeness in so far as their peculiar nature is able to receive it. For this reason it was said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' Although 'in our image' cannot be said of things inferior to man, nevertheless, 'after our likeness' can be said of all things, for the entire universe is nought else than a foot-print of divine goodness. The human race, therefore, is ordered well, nay, is ordered for the best, when according to the utmost of its power it becomes like unto God. But the human race is most like unto God when it is most one, for the principle of unity dwells in Him alone."

—Dante, *De Monarchia*, translated by Aurelia Henry, pp. 25, 26.

"God manifests Himself in three ways: outside of us, by the marks which His creative action has left in the world; within us, by His image, which is reflected in the depths of human nature; above us, by the light with which he illumines the superior region of the soul. Those who contemplate Him in the first of these manifestations, stop in the vestibule of the tabernacle; those who rise to the second have entered into the sanctuary; and those who reach the third have penetrated into the Holy of Holies, where rests the ark of the covenant, shadowed by the wings of two cherubim. And the two cherubim in turn figure the two points of view whence the invisible mysteries of the Divinity may be contemplated, namely, the unity of essence and the plurality of persons: the first susceptible of being concluded from the very idea of Being; and the last, from the very idea of Good."

—St. Bonaventura, *Progress of the Soul in God*, Ozanam, *Dante and Catholic Philosophy*, p. 455.

"There is no sensible thing in all the world more worthy to be the image of God than the sun, which with its sensible light illumines first itself, and then all celestial and elementary bodies; so God first illumines Himself with intellectual light, and then all celestial and other Intelligences."

—Dante, *The Banquet*, translated by Katharine Hillard, p. 197.

## TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. The permanent value of the ethical teachings in the *Paradiso*.
2. The artistic effect of the multiplied symbolism of the *Paradiso*.
3. Is the perfect contentment of the souls in the different heavens humanly possible?
4. Dante's teaching concerning the angels.
5. Why does Dante rank intellect above feeling?
6. Compare the three portions of Dante's poem in imagery; in music; in ethical teaching.
7. Which portion of Dante's work has the highest ethical value? Which the greatest artistic beauty? Which the deepest human interest?
8. Why is a third guide necessary; and what are the reasons for the choice of St. Bernard?
9. The mysticism of Dante.
10. What was Dante's purpose in his concluding canto?
11. Compare Dante's conclusion with the closing scenes of *Faust*.
12. What was the meaning of the Beatific Vision for the middle ages? What is its permanent meaning?
13. What is the relative value as poetry of the last canto of the *Paradiso* and the fifth of the *Inferno*?
14. Compare the Beatific Vision with Browning's *Abt Vogler*.
15. Compare Dante, Goethe and Browning in the treatment of the eternal womanly.
16. How far does the value of the *Divine Comedy* lie in its highest poetical passages, how far in the artistic and ethical significance of the whole?
17. The range and height of Dante as a poet; as a teacher of the truths of human life.

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## SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that one should read Dante rather than criticism and comment upon Dante. Of the student's time for the work of this course at least three-fourths should be devoted to the study of the *Divine Comedy*. The *Vita Nuova*, *Minor Poems* and *Banquet* of Dante are second only to his masterpiece in importance, while the treatise on *Monarchy* gives his view of the political life of mankind.

Those who take up the *Divine Comedy* for the first time are advised to read widely in the poem, paying little attention to notes; and then, when some general perspective of the work of art as a whole is obtained, to return and study carefully canto by canto, using such critical apparatus as that furnished, for instance, by the notes in Longfellow's translation. The historical references are interesting, but comparatively unimportant; it is the beauty of the poem and the interpretation it gives of human life that the student should strive to appreciate.

Where a group can read together it is well to use several translations, comparing the different renderings of Dante's thought. Such a comparative study will give a much fuller understanding of Dante's art than is possible through the use of a single translation.

Students with even a slight knowledge of Italian are urged to use the original in connection with some literal prose translation. The edition in the Temple Classics, giving the original and translation on parallel pages, is excellent for this purpose. Even a very imperfect reading of portions of the original will give an appreciation of Dante's wonderful music and of the perfect marrying of the soul of thought to the body of expression in his art, that can be but faintly suggested in the best of translations.

A preliminary reading of some good biography of Dante and sketch of his age, such as Federn's, Butler's, Scartazzini's, Toynbee's or Gardner's, is recommended. Commentaries and notes should be consulted less for interpretation than to obtain information needed for the understanding of the text; while criticism, as in the admirable essays of Church, Lowell and Carlyle, should be read chiefly to stimulate the student's own thinking, and only after he has formed his own conception of Dante's work.



## BOOK LIST.

Books starred are of special value in connection with this course; those double-starred are texts for study and discussion, or are otherwise of first importance.

### TEXTS.

Dante, \*\**Complete Works*, edited by Edward Moore: "The Oxford Dante." Pp. viii+490. University Press, Oxford, 1894.

The best single-volume edition of Dante's works, with a text that may be regarded as the standard.

Other excellent editions of the text of the *Divine Comedy* with full notes are those by \*\*Fratricelli, pp. 723+cxxx, Florence, 1889, and by \*\*Scartazzini, pp. xvi+1042+121, Milan, 1899.

### TRANSLATIONS.

Dante, \*\**The Divine Comedy*, translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Pp. viii+760. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1895.

This translation (in blank verse) is especially recommended as combining poetic vitality with scholarly fidelity to the original. The above edition contains a well-balanced selection of valuable notes and illustrative material.

Dante, \**The Divine Comedy*, translated by Charles Eliot Norton. New revised edition, 3 volumes. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1902.

An admirable prose translation. Compare with it the prose translations by Arthur John Butler, 3 volumes, Macmillan, New York, 1902; H. F. Tozer, Oxford, 1904; John A. Carlyle (*Inferno*), Bohn Library, 1849; Edward Sullivan (*Inferno*), Elliot Stock, London, 1893; W. S. Dugdale (*Purgatorio*), Macmillan, New York, 1892.

Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, translated by Henry F. Cary, together with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's translation of *The New Life*, edited by Oscar Kuhns. Pp. xxxiv+476. Crowell & Co., New York, 1897.

One of the best editions of Cary's translation, provided with a good modern introduction and notes, and published at a low price. Cary's translation, made a century ago, is sometimes inaccurate and is not abreast of modern scholarship. It is, however, in virile English blank verse and can be obtained at a very low price. Most general publishers issue Cary's translation in editions costing from twenty cents upwards.

Dante, *\*The Divine Comedy*, Italian text by H. Oelsner, with prose translation on parallel pages by Philip H. Wicksteed and others. 3 volumes. Temple Classics, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1899.

Other translations which may with advantage be studied in comparison with the above are those in terza rima by Frederick K. H. Haselfoot, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., London, 1887; James Innes Minchin, Longmans, Green, & Co., London, 1885; \*E. H. Plumptre, D. C. Heath & Co., Boston, 1899; and those by George Musgrave (*Inferno*, in Spenserian stanza), Macmillan, New York, 1896; Thomas William Parsons (*Inferno*, part of the *Purgatorio*, fragments of the *Paradiso*, in alternating rhymes), Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1893; J. C. Wright (rhymed verse), Bohn Library, London, 1861; Eugene Lee Hamilton (*Inferno*, in rhymed verse attempting to reproduce Dante's feminine endings), Mansfield & Co., New York, 1901; Marvin R. Vincent (*Inferno*, in blank verse), Scribners, New York, 1904; Charles Lancelot Shadwell (*Purgatorio*, in a four-line, rhymed stanza), Macmillan, New York, 1892-1899.

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# DANTE

Dr. Edward  
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The three beasts encountered by the poet in the opening of the poem. Dr. Griggs explained, represent the three great sins of mankind. The leopard, with his gaily colored skin, typifies the sins of incontinence, which are punished in the upper region of the Inferno. They are the least guilty of human frailties. Violence toward God, your neighbor and yourself, which is punished in the second great division of the Inferno, is represented by the lion. Finally, the wolf, which is the third of the animals to terrify Dante, embodies the thought of fraud and malice, the most heinous sins according to the poet. These three beasts, declared Dr. Griggs, represent the "great brute facts" of sin, which were in evidence in the Italy of Dante's time and continue to exist in the world today.

To get by these creatures, Dr. Griggs continued, Virgil told the poet that he must go through hell, purgatory, and heaven. It means that if a person is awakened to the apparent chaos and lack of justice in the world, he must discover a reason in it, and according to the poet

Dublin, F

THE organ of the party led by Griffith and Michael Collins called "An Saorstat," which for "The Free State."

Its first issue will appear today. be a weekly publication, edited by State Publicity Committee, and pearance is regarded as making mal launching of the election c for acceptance of the Anglo-Irish

An advance copy of the issue was ed to the Associated Press corres today. The leading editorial, sig Arthur Griffith, begins as follows:

"What the people of Ireland have for generations—Saorstat Eireann (a free State)—is reborn. It is for see that the child of freedom is no gled in its cradle." The editorial ues: "The Free State is here to good the claim that the people land, invested with the power of s ernment, are gifted and efficient to make Ireland the peer of any

## THROUGH PURGATORY

Dr. Edward Howard Griggs Shows How  
the Lessons Dante Learned Are Applicable to Everyday Life

Dante's climb with Virgil up the mountain of Purgatory was the subject of Dr. Edward Howard Griggs's lecture at Tremont Temple this morning. He devoted some time to Dante's description of nature and showed how his version differed from that of Wordsworth, Longfellow, and Whittier. Dante's nature, he said, is similar to the nature in California, where flaming flowers have a sensuous appeal, and not the nature of New England, which leads to quiet meditation. For to Dante a cloud represented a symbol that hid God's sunshine.

Dr. Griggs emphasized the struggle to climb the mountain of Purgatory, comparing it to the effort man must exert to ascend the ethical mountain. Only when climbing becomes as easy as drifting down a stream has one reached the height, he added. He also dwelt upon the circle of pride—the circle in which Dante felt he would have to atone for his own earthly life.

In closing, he mentioned the universal joy shared by all the souls in Purgatory when some one has achieved a good deed. The very mountain itself trembles. Dr. Griggs expressed the hope that some day mankind would have the same loving feeling for mankind. "When a scientist makes a wonderful discovery, do all other scientists rejoice and send him their congratulations? They do not—certainly not enough to make the earth tremble."

Next Saturday, Dr. Griggs's subject will be "The Two Types of Paradise"—the earthly and the celestial.

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